

# RIETVELD'S VISIONS





# **TEFAF MAASTRICHT**

Galerie VAN DEN BRUINHORST  
Historical design and modern art, from the early 20th century





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Galerie VAN DEN BRUINHORST

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[www.vandenbruinhorst.com](http://www.vandenbruinhorst.com)

# Galerie VAN DEN BRUINHORST

VAN DEN BRUINHORST is an internationally oriented gallery housed in the old center of the medieval Dutch city of Kampen, about an hour north-east of Amsterdam. For more than 30 years, the gallery has been researching, restoring, showcasing, and selling historical design of museum-quality and works of art from the early 20th century.

The gallery was founded by Aagje Voordouw and Ad van den Bruinhorst. After studying fine arts, Ad began working as a vintage design dealer in 1992. As a great admirer of the modernist movements of the 1920s and 1930s, he focused on interwar modern design. Through archival research and the in-person restoration of the objects, he became an expert in this field.

The collection contains exclusive works of art and applied arts that have played an important role in the development of art and design worldwide. These objects are regularly sought out by avid collectors, decorators, and national and international museums such as Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas, and the Milwaukee Art Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA.





**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

Around the 1920s Gerrit Rietveld transformed from a local Dutch cabinetmaker into one of the most influential architects and designers of the 20th century. Together with the paintings of Piet Mondriaan and Bart van der Leck, the early Rietveld designs became world-famous icons of the aesthetic movement 'De Stijl'. After his huge contribution to 'De Stijl', he continued to renew himself by playing a significant role in the subsequent modern movements. Rietveld was a true architectural visionary and although his designs were created about a hundred years ago, they remain "modern" and continue to inspire many young designers and architects around the globe today.

**Catalogue TEFAF Maastricht Focus 2026, 'Rietveld's Visions'**

Galerie Van den Bruinhorst presents Rietveld's architectural visions, his ongoing artistic development and ingenious versatility to the visitors of TEFAF focus 2026, showcasing a balanced selection of outstanding design objects that highlight each decade of his impressive career.

- 1920s Beach Buggy  
Schröder/End-Table  
Beugel Chairs
- 1930s Writing Desk r6  
Zigzag Chairs  
Crate Desk.  
Wall Light
- 1940s Sideboard r45
- 1950s Aluminum Side-Chair

With contributions from art historian Rob Driessen and restorer Jurjen Creman, both renowned experts on the works of Gerrit Rietveld.



**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Beach Buggy* 1922–1923

Framework of pine wood slats supporting a plywood seating and backrest, with wheels made of wood and plywood connected to the frame with axes of solid steel. Painted red, yellow, blue, black and white.

DIMENSIONS 54.5 × 60 × 102.5 cm |  
21.5 × 23.6 × 40.4 in

EXECUTED BY Rietveld's regular cabinetmaker Gerard van de Groenekan under Rietveld's control, Utrecht, The Netherlands, second half of the 1920s.

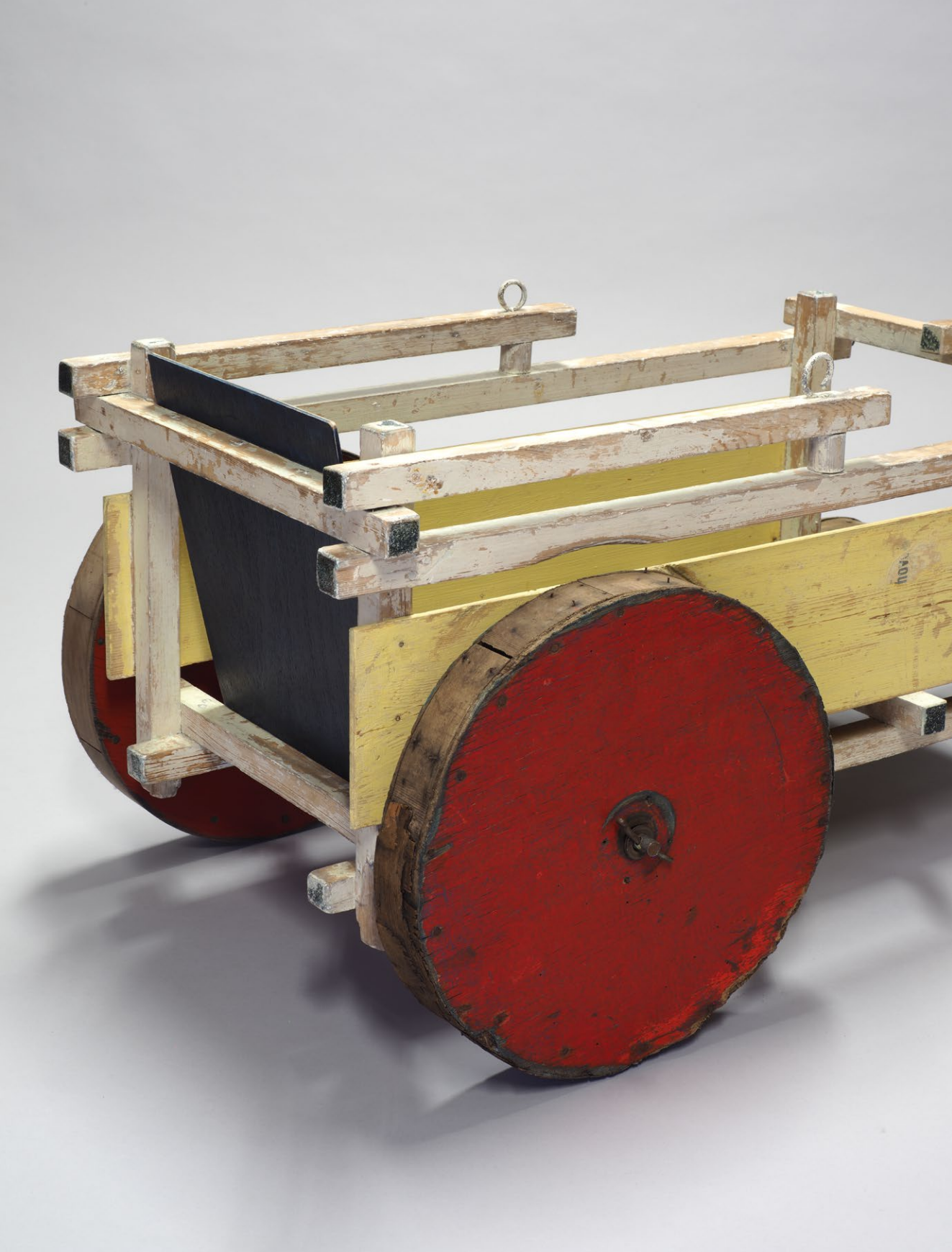
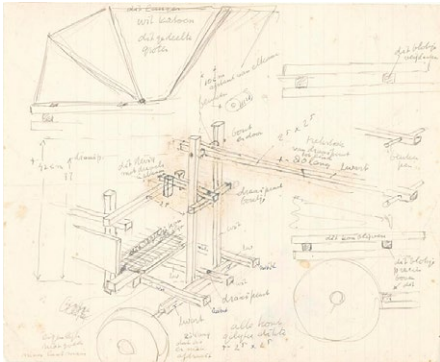
**Provenance**

Passed on by inheritance within a Dutch family from the second half of the 1920s to 2025.

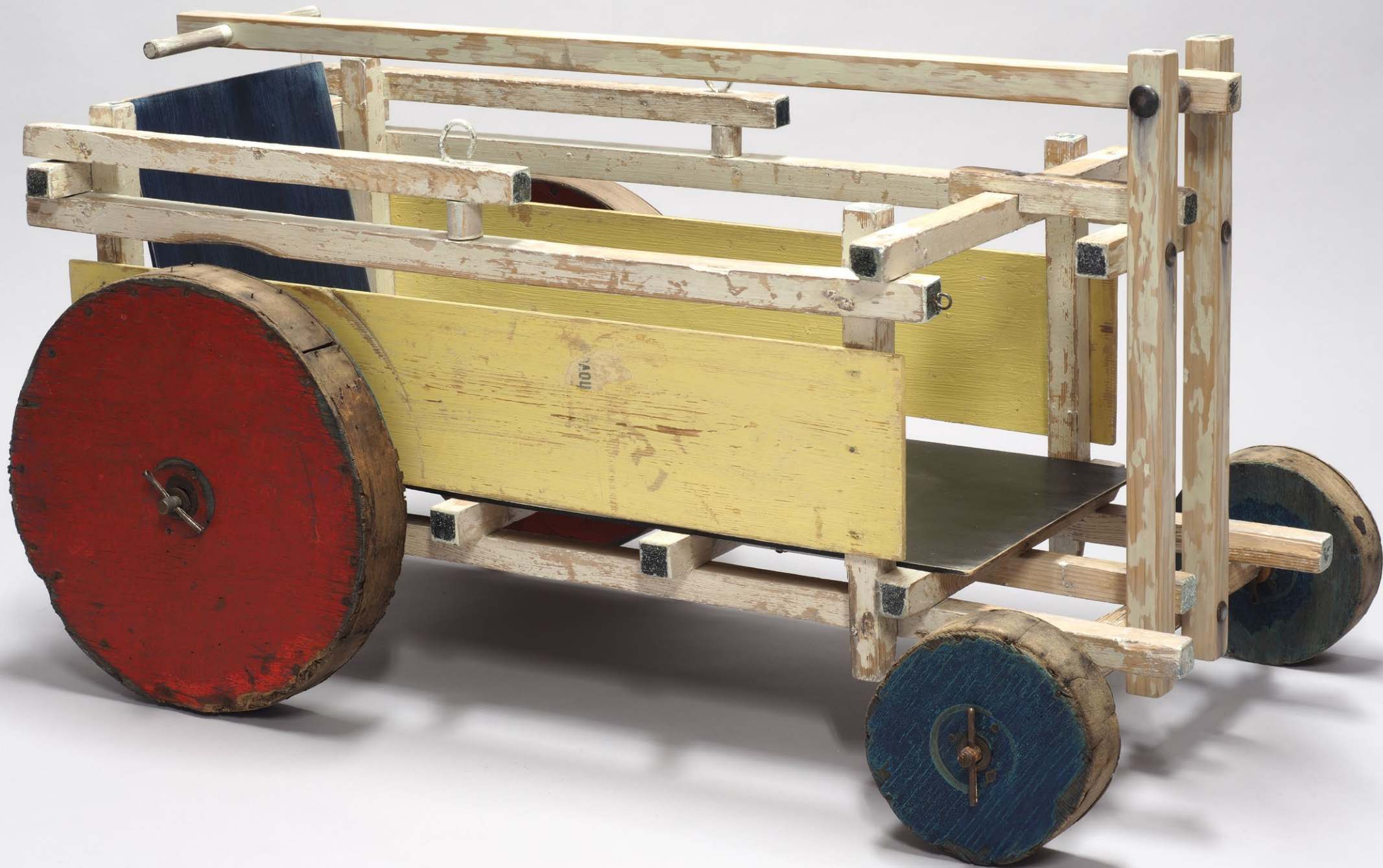
**Literature**

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 89; Peter Vöge, *The complete Rietveld Furniture*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1993, p. 58–59; Danielle Baroni, *The furniture of Gerrit Thomas Rietveld*, Barron's Educational series, Inc. New York 1978, p. 52–53.

The Beach Buggy from 1923 is composed of the same visual elements as one of Rietveld's first groundbreaking designs the 'Latten-leunstoel' (Slatted Armchair) from 1918, except that circles now play a prominent role in the design. With the Beach Buggy he used different primary colors to emphasize each separate part of the construction. A method he applies in the same year for the monochrome 'Slatted Armchair', changing it into 'The Red and Blue Chair', by which it became a world-famous icon of the Aesthetic movement 'De Stijl'. With the Beach Buggies and Wheelbarrows, both being designs for children, he possibly first felt the freedom to experiment with this color scheme. The buggy here on offer is one of the three oldest surviving examples of this design and still shows a fair amount of its original red, yellow, blue, black and white lacquer.







**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Schröder Table also called End Table* 1923

Base, frame and top made of plywood; base and top connected to the frame with visible dovetail joints; top supported by a thin, massive Beachwood slat; painted red, yellow, blue, black and white.

DIMENSIONS 60 × 50 × 50 cm | 23.6 × 23.6 × 19.7 in

EXECUTED BY Gerard van de Groenekan under Rietveld's control, De Bilt, The Netherlands, 1958–1964.

Marked with: H.G.M. G.A. v.d. GROENEKAN DE BILT NEDERLAND at the base.

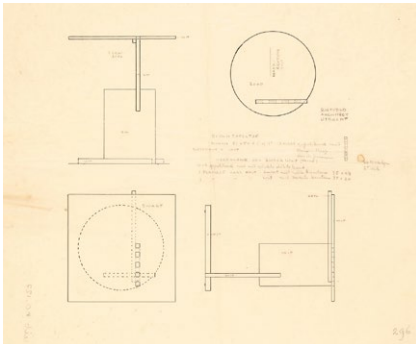
**Provenance**

ca. 1958 Truus Schröder; 1985 heirs of Truus Schröder; Sotheby's Paris, 2024.

**Literature**

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 93; Peter Vöge, *The complete Rietveld Furniture*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1993, p. 58–59.

The 'Schröder Table' is a true representative of the Aesthetic movement 'De Stijl'. It is an asymmetrical balance act of geometric forms in primary colors that points out space rather than enclosing it. The table here on offer originates from the interior of an iconic building designed by Rietveld, the 'Rietveld-Schröder house' in the city of Utrecht. Truus Schröder, the owner and resident of the house, commissioned Rietveld's regular cabinetmaker, Gerard van de Groenekan, to make this table during the period that she and Gerrit Rietveld lived together in the 'Rietveld-Schröder house' from 1958 until he died in 1964.







**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*A pair of identical Beugel Stoelen, lounge chairs Model A* 1927

Molded plywood seating/backrest mounted with bolts and nuts on two identical tubular frames of steel; lacquered black and silver.

DIMENSIONS 59 × 41 × 57 cm | 23.2 × 16 × 22.4 in

EXECUTED BY The Dutch avant-garde warehouse 'Metz & Co.' under Rietveld's control, Amsterdam/The Hague, The Netherlands, 1931–1935.

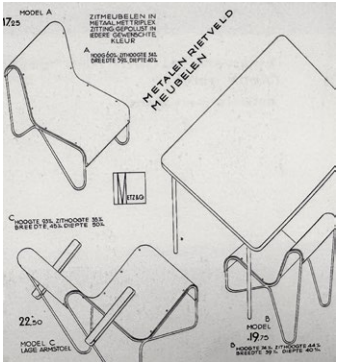
**Provenance**

Private Dutch collection; Sotheby's Paris, 2024.

**Literature**

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 117–118; Peter Vöge, *The complete Rietveld Furniture*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1993, p. 74–75; Petra Timmer, *Metz & Co de creatieve jaren*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1995, p. 77–94.

This revolutionary design is a prime example of Rietveld's ongoing attempt to create products that could be easily assembled with machine-made prefabricated parts. Two identical steel frames are connected by a seat and backrest made from a single piece of molded plywood. By extending the plywood both front and back with a curve around the frames, he created stability without using crossbars. The prefab parts are light, stackable, and easy to transport and store before mounting. All these features made the 'Beugel Stoel' very suitable for mass production, but the design was too far ahead of its time, and production remained very limited. Therefore, a pair of identical chairs is very rare.







**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Two-part Writing Desk r6* 1931

On the left: A black lacquered wooden top on a silver-painted metal frame with nickel-plated tubular steel legs. A white painted drawer unit with two small drawers and nickel-plated handles is mounted under the desktop.

On the right: A black-stained cabinet with white edges and a glass top, four storage compartments, and three large drawers with nickel-plated handles.

DIMENSIONS 70 × 150 × 90 cm | 27.5 × 59 × 35.4 in

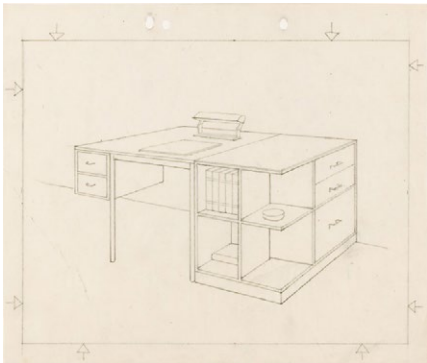
EXECUTED BY The Dutch avant-garde warehouse 'Metz & Co.' under Rietveld's control, Amsterdam/The Hague, The Netherlands, 1931–1935.

**Provenance**

Gilles Pieter de Neve, Dutch publisher of art calendars, Amsterdam, 1931/35–1978; His daughter Joanne de Neve, 1978–2015.

**Literature**

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 134–135; Petra Timmer, *Metz & Co de creatieve jaren*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1995, p. 77–94.



In this design, Rietveld combines features of 'De Stijl' with the principles of functionalism. Desk r6 was given a prominent position at three historical presentations in the 1930s, showcasing the new furniture that marked a turn in Rietveld's career as an architect and furniture designer towards functionalism. It also marks the beginning of a long and fruitful cooperation between Rietveld and the avant-garde warehouse 'Metz & Co.' in Amsterdam.







**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Hillebrand Zigzag Chair* 1934–1935.

Four solid white stained deal planks joint together with eight dovetail joints, solid wooden wedges, and brass bolts and nuts.

DIMENSIONS 38.5 × 41.5 x74, 5 cm |  
15.2 × 16.3 × 29.3 in

EXECUTED BY Gerard van de Groenekan  
in commission of Gerrit Th. Rietveld for  
the Hillebrand Mansion in The Hague,  
The Netherlands, 1934–1935.

#### Provenance

One of the two surviving 'Hillebrand Zigzag Chairs' is part of the collection of the 'Centraal Museum' in Utrecht, The Netherlands. We acquired the other chair directly from the Hillebrand family, which had passed it down by inheritance.

#### Literature

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 145–147, cat.no. 189. and p. 161, cat.no. 224,225; Frits Bless, *Rietveld*, Bert Bakker/Erven Thomas Rap, 1982 p. 129, cat.no. 132–134; Luca Dosi Delphini, *The Furniture Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, NAI publishers Rotterdam/Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2004, p. 309–313.



The 'Hillebrand Zigzag Chair' is one of the oldest known solid-wood Zigzag chairs to survive. Early Zigzag chairs were commissioned by Rietveld himself for use in the interiors and houses he designed between 1934 and 1936 for the Dutch families Mees, Hillebrand, Birza, Harrenstein, and Wilma. The chair here on offer was made for use on stage by musicians during in-house concerts at the mansion Rietveld designed for the Hillebrand family in The Hague. It all comes together in a historic photo the avant-garde photographer Eva Besnyö made of the interior of the mansion, showing the white Zigzag chair standing on stage behind a music stand in 1935.







**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Marjan Schröder Zigzag Chair* 1934–1935

Four solid deal planks, joint together with six dovetail joints, wooden wedges, iron screws, and brass bolts and nuts.

DIMENSIONS 37 × 43.5 x74 cm | 14.6 × 17.1 × 29.1 in

EXECUTED BY Gerard van de Groenekan under Rietveld's control, De Bilt, The Netherlands, ca. 1940s.

Like some prewar examples, this chair has a beautiful patina with remnants of kaolin (pipe clay), a finish Rietveld noted in some of his drawings.

**Provenance**

Marjan Schröder (1913–1990), Amsterdam  
ca. 1940s-1989/90; Milka Henriques de Castro,  
The Netherlands ca. 1989/90–2025.

**Literature**

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 145–147, cat.no. 189;  
Luca Dosi Delphini, *The Furniture Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, NAI publishers Rotterdam and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2004, p. 309–313.

This is one of two identical Zigzag chairs from the home of Marjan Schröder, daughter of Truus Schröder. From the late 1940s, Marjan lived together with her sister Han and Han's partner, Cora Henriques de Castro, in a house on 'De Oude Waal' in Amsterdam. According to Cora's niece, Milka Henriques de Castro, who frequently visited her aunt as a child, the interior of the house was partly designed and furnished by Rietveld. As a token of their friendship, Marjan gave Milka two Zigzag chairs, which she had known since childhood and which originated from this house. Milka sold one of the chairs to the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, The Netherlands; the other one is now presented at TEFAF.









**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Crate-Desk* 1935

Solid pine planks mounted with wood joints and iron screws.

DIMENSIONS 60 × 70 × 100 cm |  
23.6 × 27.5 × 39.4 in

EXECUTED BY The Dutch avant-garde warehouse 'Metz & Co.' under Rietveld's control, Amsterdam, The Netherlands ca. 1938.

**Provenance**

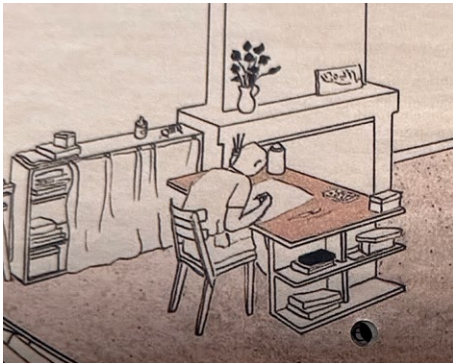
Otto Heinrich Treumann and Jettie Olivier, Amsterdam-Weesp ca. 1938 – 2001; Babette Treumann, Amsterdam 2001–2025.

**Literature**

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 155–156, cat.no. 208.

In 1934 Rietveld designed a Crate-Chair, a cupboard and a low table; the small desk was added to the series a year later. Rietveld described his 'Crate-Furniture' as being made according to the "free carpentry method, which goes straight for its purpose". The avant-garde department store 'Metz & Co.' began selling 'Crate-Furniture' in 1935. It was presented in a separate folder as 'Weekend Furniture' for second homes or student dorms.

This desk was owned by graphic designer Otto Heinrich Treumann (1919–2001) and illustrator Jettie Olivier (1918–2003). Both studied in the second half of the 1930s at the renowned NK (Dutch art-school named 'New Art-School') founded by the Dutch artist Paul Citroen. A fellow student, friend, and interior designer, Benno Premssela, captured Jettie in a drawing sitting at the 'Crate-Desk', in the living room of their apartment on the Vossiusstraat in Amsterdam. After 2001, the desk was passed on to their daughter, Babette Treumann.







## Gerrit Th. Rietveld 1888–1964

### *Vijverhof Wall Light* 1935

Chrome-plated brass frame holding five opal glass plates mounted on a brass base with fitting.

DIMENSIONS 20.5 × 10.5 × 21.5 cm | 8.1 × 4.1 × 8.5 in

EXECUTED BY The Dutch avant-garde warehouse 'Metz & Co.' under Rietveld's control, Amsterdam/The Hague, The Netherlands ca. 1935.

#### Provenance

Ms. Ada Helena Hondius Crone, Bloemendaal-Amsterdam, The Netherlands ca. 1935–1984; Christies Amsterdam no. 52, 1990; Sotheby's New York no. 153, 2013; Private collector 2013–2025.

#### Literature

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 164 cat.no. 232; Peter Vöge, *The complete Rietveld Furniture*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1993, p. 100–101, cat.no. 174.

Over several decades, the Dutch feminist, patron and art collector Ada Helena Hondius-Crone (1893–1996) commissioned progressive designers and architects for renovations and interior design projects. Around 1935, Gerrit Rietveld received the commission to renovate one of her houses, a villa in the village of Bloemendaal, named 'Vijverhof'. Küper and Van Zijl, p. 164: "The renovation included a library, living room, entrance hall, and studio. Several of Rietveld's designs were also installed in the house, such as a glass tube lamp on the ceiling." Next to the Large tube lamp, Rietveld also had this small wall light from the same series mounted on one of the walls of 'Vijverhof'.





**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Sideboard r45* 1936

Painted Beech wood, plywood, metal and (wire) glass.

DIMENSIONS 93 × 200 × 51.5 cm |  
36.6 × 78.7 × 20.3 in

EXECUTED BY The Dutch avant-garde warehouse  
'Metz & Co.' under Rietveld's control, Amsterdam/  
The Hague, The Netherlands, ca. 1940.

**Provenance**

Mr. and Ms. Montagne-van Lommel, Rotterdam  
1940/41–1947; Ms. H.H. Domisse van Lommel,  
1947–1991; Ms. Foss-Montagne 1991–1995;  
Sotheby's Amsterdam 1995; Private Collector  
Amsterdam 1995–2015.

**Literature**

Petra Timmer, *Metz & Co de creatieve jaren*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 1995, p. 130, cat.no. 179–180; Marijke Küper,  
Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 204, cat.no. 322.

Sideboard r45 is designed like a modernist  
building, with a glass-and-steel facade. Like with  
the 'Rietveld-Schröder House' he designed at  
the beginning of his career, the inside and outside  
stay connected by leaving the corner of the glass  
windows open. The sideboard here on offer was  
made and sold by 'Metz & Co.' around 1940.









**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Aluminum Side/Table Chair* 1951–1964

Folded and bent out of a sheet of aluminum, assembled using blind rivets and welding.

DIMENSIONS 61 × 77 × 79 cm | 24 × 30.3 × 31.1 in

**Provenance**

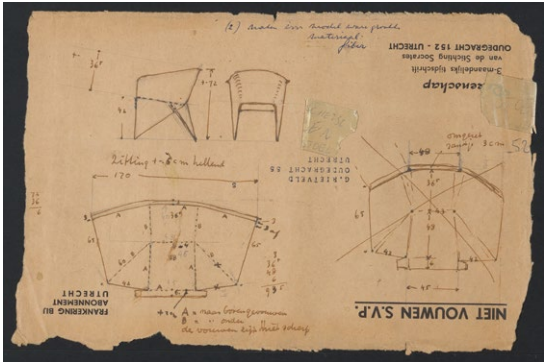
Howard and Sue Van Wagner, Malibu, California USA, before 1973; Mr. Ul Alam, England ca. 1973–2009/10; Sham Ul Alam, Manchester England 2009/10–2012/13; One of the chairs purchased by the ‘Centraal Museum Utrecht’ The Netherlands 2012; The remaining chair purchased by fine art dealer Javier Doria in Spain 2013–2014; John Turner Fairchild, collector at Ibiza Spain/Los Angeles USA 2014–2015.

**Exhibited**

Museum MAXXI, *Rietveld’s Universe*, Rome Italy 2011; Centraal Museum Utrecht, *Rietveld’s Universe*, Utrecht The Netherlands.

**Literature and publications**

[www.stedelijk.nl/nl/digdeeper/de-aluminiumstoel-van-gerrit-rietveld](http://www.stedelijk.nl/nl/digdeeper/de-aluminiumstoel-van-gerrit-rietveld); Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 196–197, cat.no. 302, p. 209–210, cat.no. 334; Luca Dosi Delphini, *The Furniture Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, NAI publishers Rotterdam and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2004, p. 317 cat.no. 501; Otakar Máčel, Sander Woertman, Charlotte van Wijk, *Chairs Catalogue of the Delft Faculty of Architecture Collection*, 010 Publishers Rotterdam 2008, p. 74–75.











# Rietveld's inspirations

*An art-historical reflection* by Rob Driessen

Rob Driessen MA, is art historian and independent consultant in the field of 20th century decorative arts and design, specializing in the work of G. Th. Rietveld.

*'When we construct, all we do is take out from natural space a suitable amount of space, enclose and protect it, and the whole of architecture is born from this necessity.'* – Gerrit Rietveld (1888–1964)

The concept of intersecting planes and lines in space is what defines many of Rietveld's works, most notably the Red and Blue chair and the Rietveld-Schröder house. Both designs are like skeletons; an easy chair and a family home turned inside-out, exposing rather than hiding their construction. Today, both works from resp. 1919 and 1924 still look strikingly modern and are recognized worldwide as icons of 20th-century design and architecture.

It is therefore hard to imagine that Rietveld started out as an apprentice in his father's cabinetmaking workshop. After finishing primary school, Rietveld was supposed to follow in his father's footsteps. Although his father taught him all the tricks of the trade and he proved to be a promising cabinet maker, the young Rietveld dreamt of bigger things. He spent his scarce spare time drawing and reading, trying to further educate himself.





Around the age of 16, Rietveld decided to shape his own future. He started taking evening classes with the architect P.J.C. Klaarhamer, an architect with a modern, broad perspective on architecture and art. At Klaarhamer's classes, Rietveld was introduced to the work of contemporary artists and architects, as well as phenomena such as concrete construction and factory-made furniture. Hungry for more knowledge, Rietveld enrolled in the Utrecht School for Applied Art, where he soon stood out as an exceptionally gifted student.

Notwithstanding his good school results, a conflict between Rietveld and his father was inevitable. Gerrit was strongly opposed to his father's traditional approach to cabinetmaking. The old Rietveld preferred heavy furniture with profiles and carvings in a historicized style, whereas Gerrit wanted simple and honest furniture of clear construction and sober materials. In May 1917, Gerrit started his own cabinetmaking workshop in Utrecht. Soon after, Gerard van de Groenekan joined him as an apprentice. Little could the then 13-year-old Gerard have known that he would devote his life and career to the work of his master Rietveld.

It was not until the spring of 1919 that Rietveld joined the legendary De Stijl group, two years after its founding, but his involvement would have a great impact on the group as a whole. Eventually, his Red and Blue chair would become an icon of the De Stijl movement. Rietveld's baptism into De Stijl marked a turning point in his career: he gained access to key figures of the international avant-garde such as Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius, Kurt Schwitters, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and his radically new furniture designs were featured in numerous international publications. His involvement with De Stijl inspired Rietveld

to further experiment with furniture composed of planes and lines, now in combination with asymmetry and a primary colour scheme. The Berlin chair, the end table, and even the children's beach buggy hence look like De Stijl paintings, or rather constructivist compositions, in 3D.

Another decisive moment in Rietveld's life and career was his encounter with Truus Schröder-Schräder. Rietveld's metamorphosis from local cabinet maker to internationally renowned architect could not have been without the involvement of Schröder (who later dropped her maiden name Schräder). To call her Rietveld's muse would not do justice to her role as his soulmate, inspirator and promoter -or even, as Rietveld wrote, his 'conscience'. The Rietveld-Schröder house in Utrecht, which made Rietveld's reputation, still carries both their names as a testament to their unique relationship.

While Schröder stimulated (and partly financed) Rietveld's career in architecture, Rietveld in turn encouraged her to establish herself as an interior architect and become his associate. In 1925, shortly after the house's completion, Rietveld moved his practice to a room on the ground floor and placed a plate next to the front door reading 'Schröder & Rietveld Architects'. During the late 1920s and the early 1930s, Rietveld and Schröder worked together on several interiors, mostly refurbishing existing rooms, for a small circle of friends and relatives. As commissions were scarce, Rietveld profited from Truus Schröders' extensive upper-middle-class network in and outside Utrecht. With Truus, Rietveld moved away from his De Stijl idiom, using curves rather than straight angles, fibre and metal rather than wood, and a warm and earthy colour palette.

With his Beugel Chair, conceived in 1927, Rietveld used the pliancy of a metal rod for the first time to create a continuous form. The frame consisted of two metal braces (hence the name Beugel Stoel, meaning brace chair), connected by a single sheet of fibreboard, which was attached to the frame with small nuts and bolts. The visual quality of the undulating lines of the frame and seating shell reveals Rietveld's ambition to make a one-piece chair. In 1928, Rietveld presented the Beugel Chair at 'Der Stuhl', an international exhibition in Stuttgart, Germany. It was the first modernist chair using the seating-shell principle, which would be further developed by designers such as Aalto, Saarinen, and the Eameses.

In 1931, the Beugel Chair was taken into production by Metz & Co., the exclusive Amsterdam department store that would become Rietveld's major source of income for many years to come. Metz & Co. established itself in the late 1920s as a champion of functionalism. Inspired director Joseph de Leeuw, encouraged amongst others, the painter Bart van der Leek, the architect J.J.P. Oud, and Rietveld to design furniture and textiles to be produced in the company's own workshops. Apart from the Dutch avant-garde, Metz & Co. offered works by leading foreign designers such as Aalto, Breuer, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe. Whilst Rietveld made the first examples of the Beugel Chair with a solid rod frame and a fiber seat, Metz applied a tubular steel frame and a plywood seating shell.

In the early 1930s, Rietveld further developed the idea of a chair of undulating form. The next step was to find the material most suitable for this design. On a drawing dated 1932, Rietveld noted that the chair should be made out of steel. He then made a prototype from a single sheet of fiber,

supported by two Z-shaped metal strips, as well as a chair composed of four triplex boards attached to a similar metal frame (both in the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam). Not satisfied with the results, Rietveld turned to tubular steel, which also proved unsuitable for the zigzag form he sought. So eventually, he settled on the now-classic zigzag chair composed of four wooden segments, made by Gerard van de Groenekan and Metz & Co. in various shapes, woods, and colours.

As Kuper and Van Zijl state in their standard work on Rietveld: 'within the oeuvre of Rietveld the Zigzag Chair is the purest example of the synthesis between form, function and construction.' Rietveld himself applied the chair in many of his interiors, even after the Second World War, as he was quite fond of the design. He described the chair as "a partition which leaves the space intact. It is not a chair, but a constructive folly. I used to call it *little zigzag*." Apart from chairs, Rietveld designed other furniture pieces for Metz & Co., including desks, cabinets, a sideboard, and several lamps. But the Zigzag Chairs would become one of his most successful and widespread furniture designs.

During the war years, Rietveld's practice was at a standstill, which gave him the opportunity to once again take up the idea of the one-piece chair made from a single sheet of material. Frustrated, he wrote: 'How can it be that a construction as simple as a chair has not yet been solved as effectively as a bicycle or even better: a spoon?' Sketching and folding scale models from scraps of paper, Rietveld conceived a variation on a chair intended for execution in fiber. As this material was unavailable and Rietveld had somehow managed to obtain a sheet of aluminum, the 'armstoel' (armchair) was realized in aluminum. Rietveld made the chair with his youngest son, Wim

(1924–1985), who later recalled that he and his father worked intensively together on this project, hammering and bending the metal on the family's sturdy wooden dinner table.

The resulting chair, with its pattern of both functional (to strengthen the construction) and decorative holes, had a dramatically modern, industrial appearance. Not surprisingly, commenting on the various production methods possible to make the chair, Rietveld later wrote: 'the best method would be the one that, apart from economic value, has an expressive quality in which function, construction, and production method make the same gesture.' In the years directly after the war, Rietveld made unsuccessful attempts to have the chair taken into production and eventually sold the prototype to the Stedelijk Museum. Other postwar attempts at chairs composed of molded plywood also failed to become successful.

In the early 1950s, there was a renewed interest in De Stijl. As one of the few still living members of the movement, Rietveld was approached by the New York MoMA and the Amsterdam Stedelijk to design their De Stijl exhibitions. This exposure rekindled the interest in Rietveld's prewar designs, such as his Red and Blue chair, which was now going to be produced by Gerard van de Groenekan. His international acclaim quickly spread across the Netherlands, and Rietveld received many commissions for private houses, as well as the prestigious commission to build the new Van Gogh Museum. In 1964, shortly before his death, the self-taught Rietveld was granted an honorary doctorate in architecture by Delft University as a final recognition of his extraordinary talent as both an architect and a designer.

Rob Driessen





## Gerrit Th. Rietveld 1888–1964

### *Berlin Chair* 1923

Beach, Elm and plywood with thin slats mounted around the edges. Painted black, white and shades of gray.

DIMENSIONS 106 × 73 × 58 cm |  
41.7 × 28.7 × 22.8 in

EXECUTED BY Gerard van de Groenekan, De Bilt,  
The Netherlands, ca. 1970.  
Brandmark under the seating: H.G.M., G.A. v.d.  
GROENEKAN, DE BILT NEDERLAND

#### Provenance

The Dutch architect Ir. R.E. Wilmink, Amsterdam.  
Mr. Wilmink ordered the chair directly from  
Rietveld's regular cabinetmaker Gerard van de  
Groenekan in 1970.

#### Literature

Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 92, cat.no. 71; Luca  
Dosi Delphini, *The Furniture Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, NAI publishers Rotterdam and Stedelijk Museum  
Amsterdam 2004, p. 299 cat.no. 454.

The 'Berlin Chair' was designed in 1923 for the  
exhibition 'Juryfreie Kunstschau' in Berlin. With  
this design, Rietveld radically breaks with the  
traditional chair standing on four legs. There is no  
frame; all slats and planks with which the chair is  
composed are optical and construction-wise of  
equal importance, together forming a balanced  
spatial composition of planes and lines.



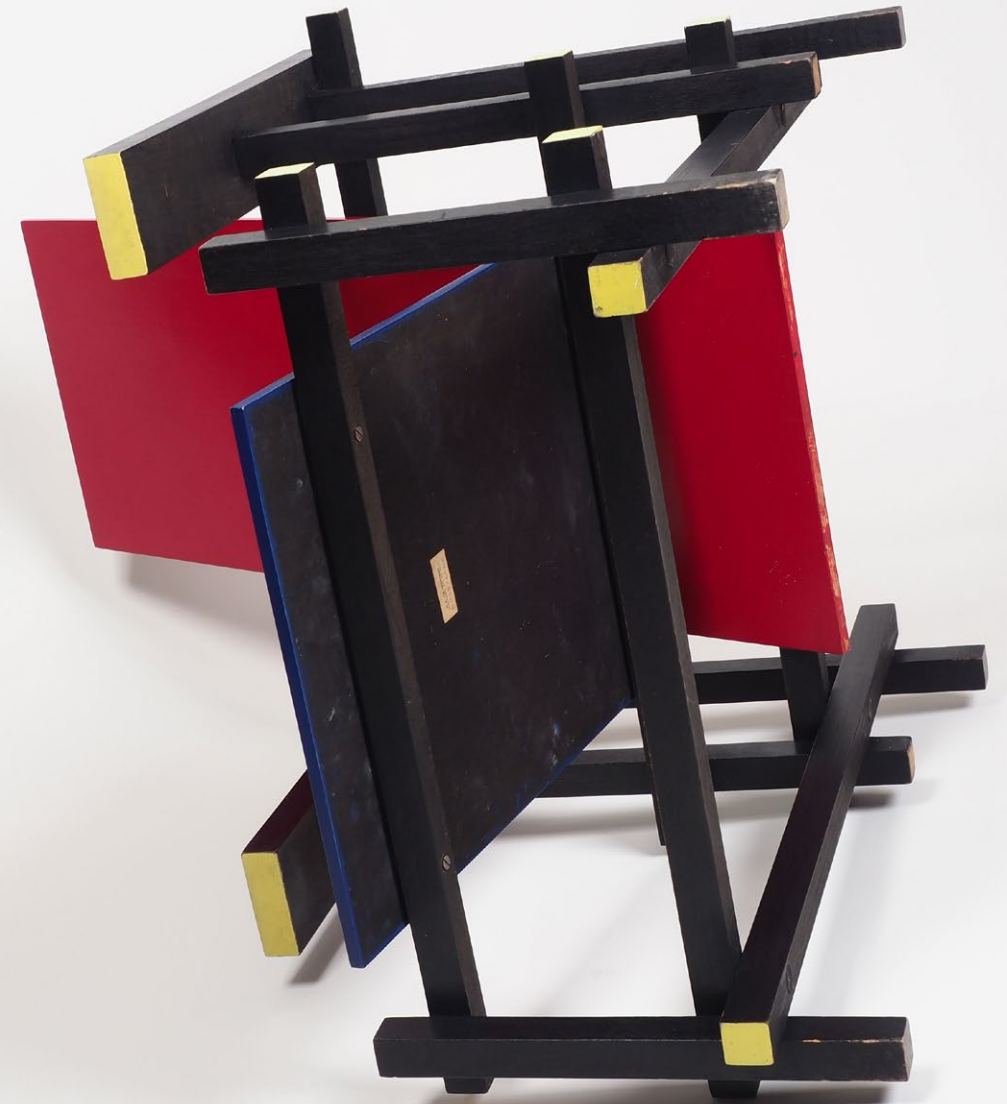
## Made by Rietveld

*A material-technical and constructional reflection* by Jurjen Creman

Since 1990, Jurjen Creman has been working on the furniture of Gerrit Rietveld as a restorer. He has been employed by the 'Centraal Museum Utrecht', where he has restored and studied pieces from their impressive collection. In 1997, he started his own workshop. In his daily work, he became aware of the importance of providing detailed descriptions of the furniture to be more specific about its originality and date of production. For years, he has been gathering knowledge and a large amount of data on the works of Rietveld, which has proven beneficial to collectors, auctioneers, and museum curators around the globe.

As a furniture conservator, you are primarily concerned with the material aspects of furniture. In a sense, you "read" the objects, as they provide information about the production process and the materials used. By carefully and systematically examining furniture, specific knowledge of these pieces emerges, enabling the identification of connections and the drawing of conclusions. In addition, archives containing drawings and photographs form a valuable supplementary source of information.

Several themes recur frequently in Rietveld's designs. First and foremost, the spatial effect plays an essential role in his furniture, but mass production, design systems, color and texture, the search for new materials and techniques, and the concept of a single-piece chair are also recurring themes. In the furniture shown here, several of these aspects can be clearly identified and recognized in the methods of production. I aim to show how, as a furniture conservator, I view these pieces.





### Beach Buggy

The Beach Buggy immediately stands out because of its bright colors. Even today, the color remains strikingly present despite the heavily weathered and damaged paint layers. The children's objects—such as the small wheelbarrow, this Beach Buggy, and the children's chair with which Rietveld first appeared in the journal 'De Stijl' in 1919—may be among the first designs in which he made extensive use of color. In this Beach Buggy, different types of paint were applied, probably to achieve specific effects. The white and yellow paints are traditional linseed oil paints, recognizable by their pronounced brushstrokes. The red and blue paints have a different binding medium and were applied much more thinly, yet they still exhibit high color intensity.

In the Beach Buggy, the construction of Rietveld's famous 'Red and Blue Chair' can be recognized, as it too is made from square-section battens. He made his Red and Blue Chairs from inexpensive beech wood, which he stained black. The design of this chair is groundbreaking not only for its use of primary colors, but especially for its construction. He made the uprights and rails all from the same square battens and joined them together with dowels. Moreover, he allowed the elements to extend past one another, thus making a complete break with the traditional furniture construction methods his father had taught him.

The Beach Buggy is made in an even more pragmatic manner than the chair, as the even cheaper pine wood was used and the joints consist of nails. To make the wagon more child-friendly and reduce protruding elements, the ends of the battens are provided with a small chamfer, and they protrude only half the thickness of the rail.

### Beugel Stoel

Because of the chair's curved seat and backrest, it is often not immediately recognized as a Rietveld design. However, from the mid-1920s onward, he was already experimenting with the then relatively new material plywood. In two chair designs from that period, he attempted to glue multiple layers of plywood together in a mold in order to obtain a curved seat or backrest. These curved seats were then incorporated into wooden constructions.

With the Beugel Stoel, he took this idea a step further by forming the seat and backrest into a single unit and mounting this shell onto tubular frames. Initially, he made the shell from vulcanized fiber, a sheet material that could be softened by soaking it in water, and then shaped; after drying, it retained its form. In the first experiments for this chair, the frames were made of solid iron, because bending tubular steel was still too challenging at the time.

The Beugel Stoel as shown here, is the most advanced version, as it was sold by Metz & Co. in the 1930s. Both the shell and the frame were prefabricated, spray-painted in color by Metz, and then assembled. The shell appears somewhat heavy because it extends far at both the front and the back, but this is intentional. Because the tubular frames are separate elements and not connected, the extended parts of the shell form the chair's cross-connection. With this design, Rietveld was among the first to create a one-piece seating shell and to give it an essential structural function at the same time.

### Zigzag Chair

In the Zigzag Chair, the spatial aspect of Rietveld's furniture is represented most clearly. It is “the line in space,” as he himself described it. The chair, which cuts through space merely as a line, was designed

and produced in the early 1930s. Drawings and sketches of Zigzag Chairs made of metal, along with prototypes in vulcanized fiber and bent plywood, show that Rietveld was searching for a smooth, flowing line in space rather than the angular one that ultimately resulted in this wooden version. The wooden version may originally have emerged as an experiment, since wood is the most logical material for a cabinetmaker to use when making a prototype.

Ultimately, this wooden version became Rietveld's most widely produced chair. There are versions made in different types of wood, with or without painted finishes. Of the chairs in the Rietveld Schröder House, it is known that they were brushed with pipe clay, giving them a beautifully worn, pale white appearance. Such special finishes can be found on many Zigzag Chairs.

The chair shown here is painted entirely white, causing the material to disappear and leaving only the form. In addition to different finishes, the chair also exists in variations of form, such as a lounge chair, armchair, children's chair, and piano stool.

### Metz Desk r6

This desk is a good example of Rietveld's thoughtful and logical approach to design. It is constructed according to a consistent system of dimensions. The desktop measures 90 × 90 cm, while the drawer unit measures 60 × 90 cm—both multiples of 30 cm, a dimension that Rietveld frequently used in his furniture designs. This system of measurement is also consistently applied in the open compartments and the drawer units. The fact that a logical height for a desk is 70 cm is resolved by Rietveld by giving the drawer unit a 10 cm plinth, thus avoiding disruption of the design scheme.

The open corner of the drawer unit is typical of Rietveld and appears in several of his furniture designs. It is the same open corner that was applied in the window on the first floor of the Rietveld Schröder House.

The strict, graphic design is reinforced by the black-and-white paint scheme. The desktop is finished in a thick sprayed black lacquer, while the other black parts are stained and show the wood grain. The top of the drawer unit has a very clean, precise appearance because it is fitted with a glass plate. The glass is painted on the underside to appear uniformly white. To protect both the paint layer and the glass, a layer of molton is placed on top of the drawer unit.

### Aluminum Chair

Although it was produced mainly by hand, this chair represents the kind of chair Rietveld long aspired to design. Several of his ideals come together in this piece. It is a chair made from (almost) a single piece of material, intended to be produced in large quantities by machine. According to tradition, during the war Rietveld folded and bent the first aluminum chair together with his son Wim at the kitchen table. In a note accompanying this first chair, he wrote that it was an aluminum model for a chair to be executed in fiber. He was searching for a material and a method of production suitable for mass manufacture. In his view, function, construction, and method of production should form a single whole and be realizable in an affordable material that also possesses expressive qualities.

A presentation drawing of the chair is known for a version in transparent plastic. There are also photographs of a small model in Plexiglas, possibly dating from before the war. These indicate that

Rietveld was constantly searching for new materials and production methods that best suited his ideas.

The model of the Aluminum Chair shown here is a post-war production. It is a high model that Rietveld sketched on the back of an old envelope, which ironically bears the words "Do not fold." The note specifies that the chair should be executed in fiber. In a drawing of a series of furniture intended to be made in rattan, the same chair is depicted in both a high and a low version. This Aluminum Chair and the archival materials demonstrate that, for Rietveld, different materials were suitable for

the execution of his design. For the first model, he deliberately chose aluminum because he could work it relatively easily himself.

Even today, previously unknown pieces of furniture by Rietveld continue to surface. Sometimes these are familiar designs, but also familiar designs in different versions—and occasionally even an entirely unknown design. Rietveld's oeuvre is extensive, and for that reason there is always something new to "read".

Jurjen Creman





**Gerrit Th. Rietveld** 1888–1964

*Red and Blue Chair* 1918–1923

Beach frame and armrests, constructed with wooden dowels, plywood seating and back, connected to the frame with iron screws and aluminum brackets.

DIMENSIONS 86 × 65.9 × 82.5 cm |  
33.9 × 25.9 × 32.5 in

EXECUTED BY Gerard van de Groenekan, De Bilt  
The Netherlands, ca. 1970.

Marked with a paper label under the seating: G.A.  
v.d. GROENEGAN Utrechtseweg 315, DE BILT  
with an addition in handwriting: "NEDERLAND".

#### Provenance

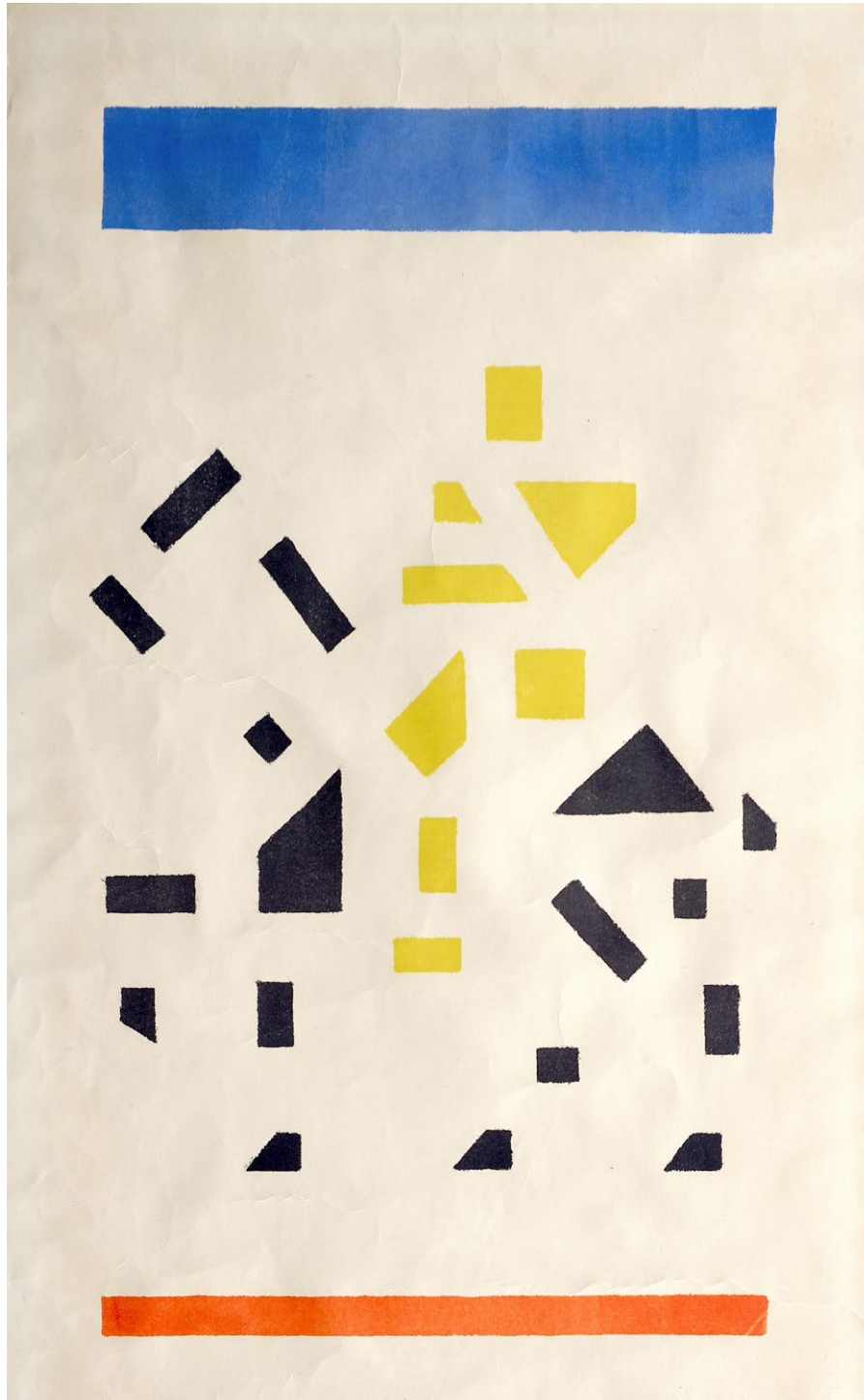
The Dutch architect Ir. RE Wilmink, Amsterdam.  
Mr. Wilmink ordered the chair directly from  
Rietveld's regular cabinetmaker Gerard van de  
Groenekan in 1970.

#### Literature

Marijke Küper, *Rietveld's Chair*, O10 Publishers Rotterdam The Netherlands 2012; Marijke Küper, Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p. 74–76, cat.no. 35.

In 1919, Gerrit Rietveld joined the legendary 'De Stijl' group, an aesthetic movement founded two years earlier by Dutch artists and architects. Possibly inspired by the works of another 'De Stijl' member, the painter Bart van der Leek, whose interesting works are also in our collection, Rietveld began experimenting with the use of primary colors in his furniture designs. In 1923, Rietveld executed the first example of the 'Slatted Armchair' he designed in 1918, painted in red, yellow, blue and black – the color scheme that would make the chair a world-famous design-icon.





**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Works in our collection by one of the founders of De Stijl*

'The importance of *De Stijl* – and the significant role played by Piet Mondriaan and Bart van der Leck – is difficult to overstate. The group brought about major innovations and remains influential today.

In particular, the progressive, multidisciplinary nature of the group of artists serves as a major inspiration for many contemporary artists, architects and designers.'

Benno Tempel, Hans Janssen, *Piet Mondriaan and Bart van der Leck – The invention of a new art*, Gemeentemuseum The Hague / WBOOKS, Zwolle, 2017, p. 5 and 9.



**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Man on Horseback* 1919

Lithograph on paper.

DIMENSIONS 89.1 × 39.3 cm | 35.3 × 15.2 in

EXECUTED BY W. Scherjon, Utrecht, The Netherlands 1920s, marked “Fotolitho W. Scherjon Utrecht” in printing, signed by the artist with his initials “BvdL” in ink.

**Provenance**

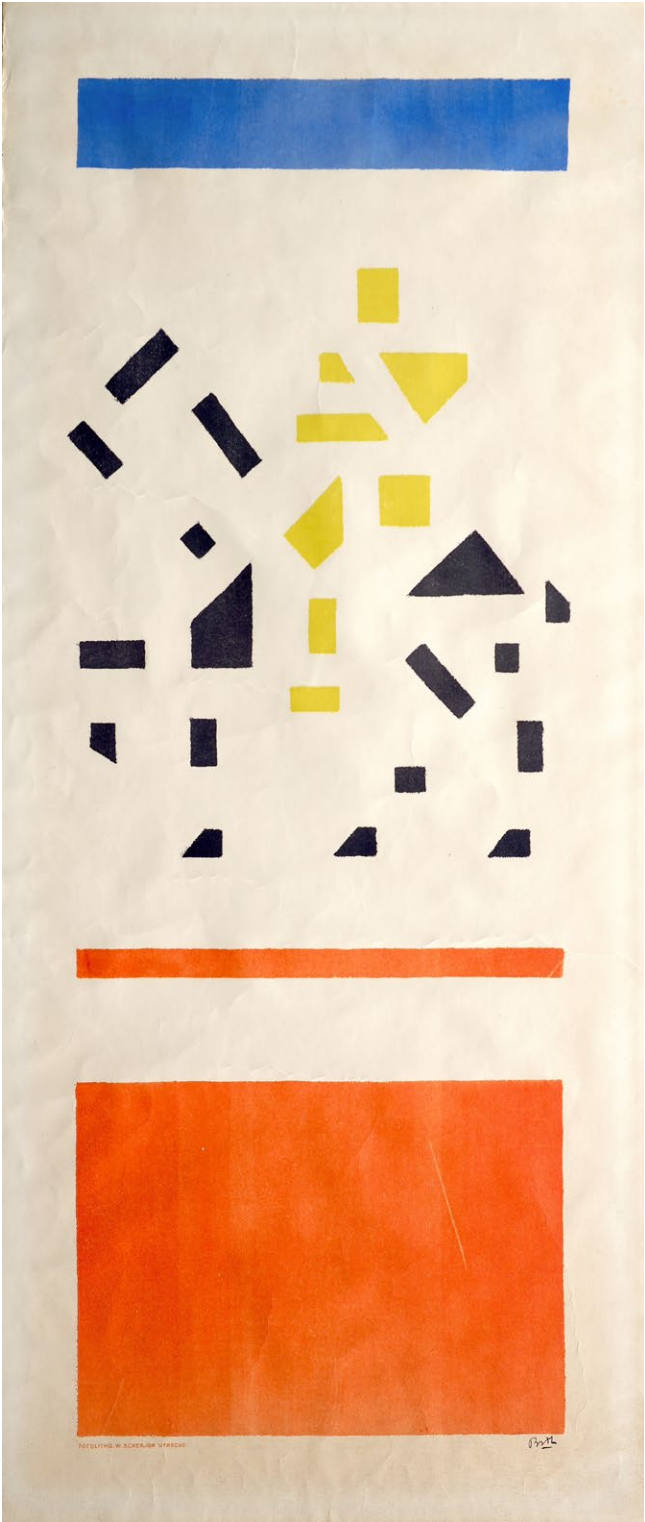
One copy in our collection originates from the artist’s private country-house. It was passed down through the artist’s family by inheritance.

One copy in our collection was owned by Henk de Leeuw, the director and owner of ‘Metz & Co.’, Amsterdam/The Hague, for whom Van der Leck worked for many years.

**Literature**

Cees Hilhorst, RKD, *Vriendschap op afstand, de correspondentie tussen Bart van der Leck en H.P. Bremmer*, Thoth, Bussum 1999, p. 101; Evert van Straaten, Cees Hilhorst, Toos van Kooten, *Bart van der Leck*, Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo 1994, p. 70–71, photo 91–92.

Lithograph based on the oil painting ‘Man on Horseback’, 1918 (coll. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands). Van der Leck used lithographs like this as a poster to announce the first retrospective of his works in Utrecht in 1919.



**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Bowl with Apples* 1922

Lithograph on paper.

DIMENSIONS 30 × 43 cm | 11.8 × 16.9 in

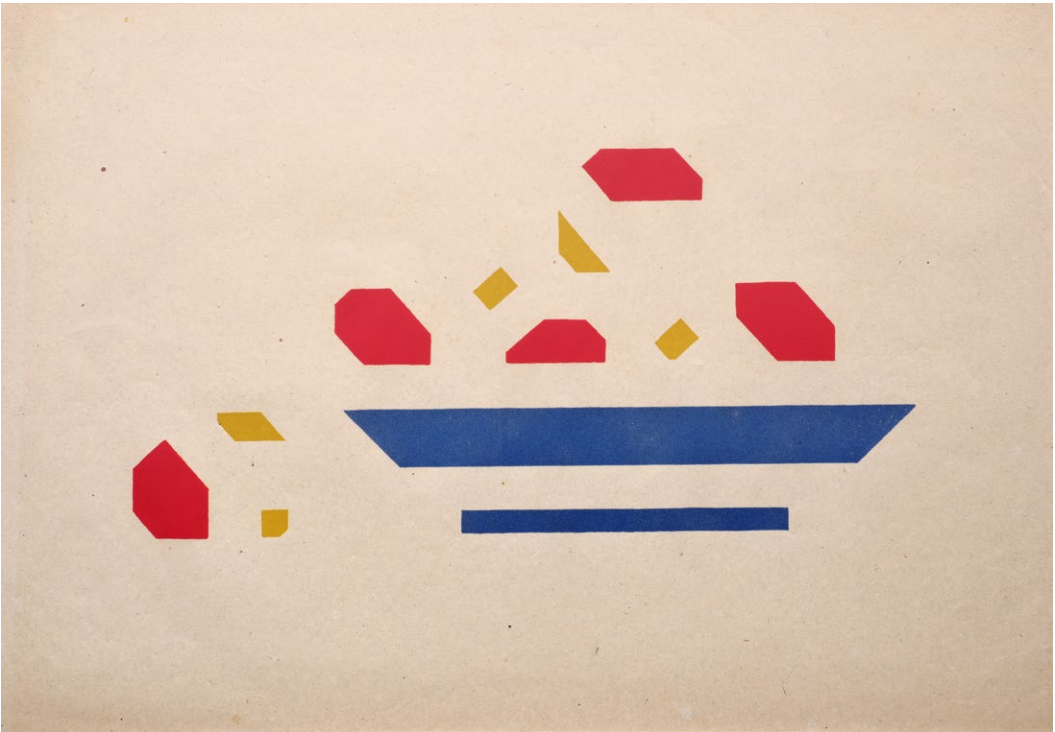
**Provenance**

Heirs of the artist.

Early lithograph from the first series on thin paper. The composition is based on the oil painting 'Bowl with Apples', 1921 (Coll. Centraal Museum Utrecht, The Netherlands). This is one of the lithographs that remained as stock in Van der Leck's studio, after his death in 1958, these copies were divided among the artist's three daughters and thus passed down through the family.

**Literature**

Cees Hilhorst, RKD, *Vriendschap op afstand, de correspondentie tussen Bart van der Leck en H.P. Bremmer*, Thoth, Bussum 1999, p. 112–113 and 121–122.





**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Farmers Girl with Cow* 1922

Lithograph on paper.

DIMENSIONS 35.5 × 46 cm | 14 × 18.1 in

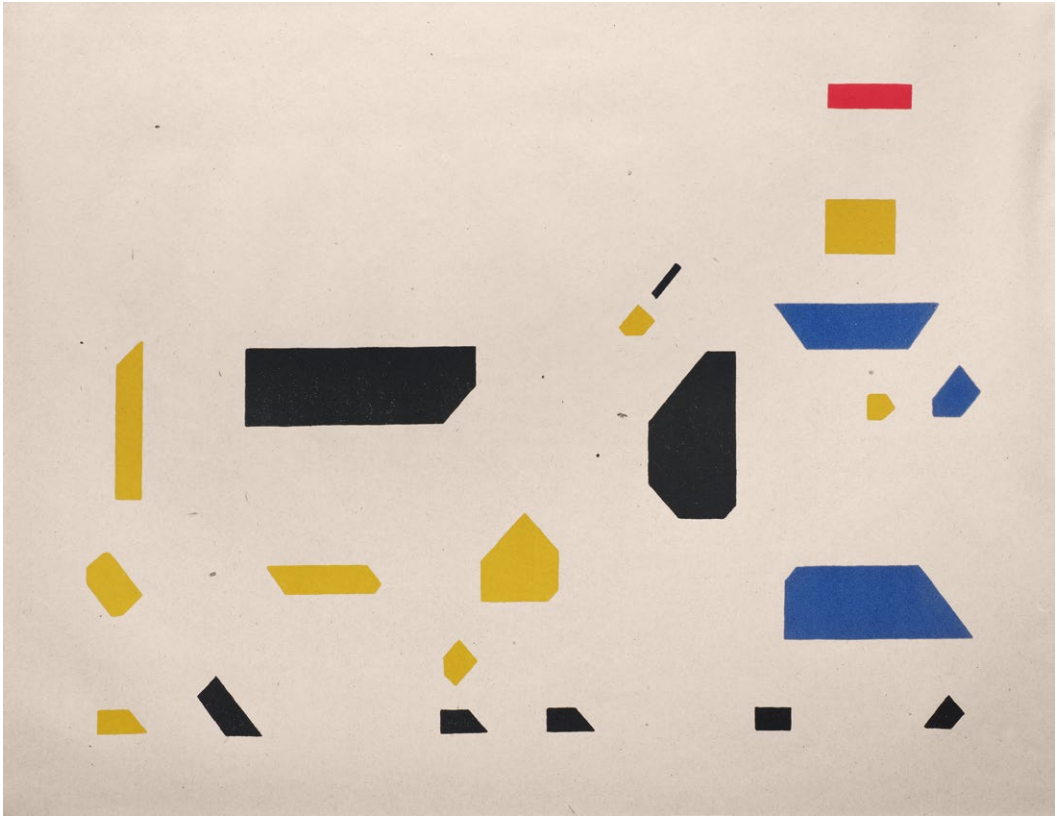
**Provenance**

Heirs of the artist.

**Literature**

Cees Hilhorst, RKD, *Vriendschap op afstand, de correspondentie tussen Bart van der Leck en H.P. Bremmer*, Thoth, Bussum 1999, p. 121–122.

Early lithograph from the first series on thin paper. The composition is based on the oil painting 'Farmers Girl with Cow', 1921 (Coll. Museum Kröller Müller, Otterlo The Netherlands). This is one of the lithographs that remained as stock in Van der Leck's studio, after his death in 1958, these copies were divided among the artist's three daughters and thus passed down through the family.



**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Ducklings* 1950s

Watercolor, charcoal and ink on paper.

DIMENSIONS 20.4 × 15 cm | 8 × 5.9 in

**Provenance**

Heirs of the artist.

**Literature**

Exhibition catalogue, *Bart Van der Leck, 1876–1958*, Kröller Müller, Otterlo and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands 1976, Cat. no. S80.

Preliminary study for the oil painting '*Ducklings*', late 1950s (private Dutch collection). Executed by the artist in the late 1950s.





**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Girl with Goat* ca. 1918

Watercolor, charcoal, crayon and pencil on paper.

DIMENSIONS 71.5 × 102 cm | 28.15 × 40.16 in

Marked with the stamp: ESTATE B. vd LECK  
No. 298.

**Provenance**

Heirs of the artist.

**Literature**

Mr. W.C. Feltkamp, *B.A. van der Leck, leven en werken*, Spruyt, Van Mantgem & De Does N.V., Leiden 1956, p. 84; Art-historian Cees Hilhorst, June 2024, inventory list 1919.

This large unique work is undated, but thanks to a recent discovery of a preliminary study and a note in the inventory list of a 1919 exhibition mentioning an oil painting with the same scene, the work can now be dated ca. 1918.



**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Ex Libris Madeleine de Vlam* 1941–1943

Pencil, gouache, and ink on paper.

DIMENSIONS 20 × 25 cm | 7.9 × 9.8 in

**Exhibited**

'Geometric abstraction and the Modern Spirit'  
5 Feb-3 April 1989, in the Neuberger Museum,  
State University of New York, at Purchase.

**Provenance**

Elaine Lustig Cohen, New York, USA, 1989;  
Christies Amsterdam, The Netherlands 2010;  
Private Dutch collection 2025.

**Literature**

Evert van Straaten, Cees Hilhorst, Toos van Kooten, *Bart van der Leck*, Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo 1994, p. 151.

Using the same typography and font as he designed for the booklet 'Het Vlas' in 1941, Van der Leck created this ex libris for Madeleine de Vlam in the early 1940s. Madeleine de Vlam was a student of H.P. Bremmer, the art advisor and dealer who sold most of Van der Leck's artworks. Her last name in Dutch "De Vlam", translates to "The Flame" in English. Van der Leck visualizes her name with three abstracted fires, accompanied by the text "Semper Fulgens" which is Latin for "Forever Shining" or "Forever Bright".

There were multiples made after this design in 1943. These multiples are about half the size of this design drawing and differ in details, such as the header at the top and the banner at the bottom.







## **Bart van der Leck** 1976–1958

### *Ceramics*

Around 1934, Bart van der Leck, together with H. Tutein Nolthesius (Dutch entrepreneur and art collector) and Harm Kamerlingh Onnes (friend and Dutch Artist), started experimenting with making decorative ceramics in Delft, The Netherlands.

Van der Leck handled the glazing and firing of the glazed objects himself in one of his two kilns, which were delivered by H. Tutein Nolthesius in 1935–1936. He sourced the raw materials for the glaze from the well-known Biddel company in Meissen, Germany.

He sometimes made multiple copies of a theme or design, but he always experimented with lines and areas of color in such a way that no two tiles, plates or vases are exactly the same. Only the approved copies were signed by him.

#### **Resources**

- Jan Schonk, grandson of the artist.
- Exhibition catalogue, *Bart van der Leck 1876–1958*, Museum Kröller Müller, Otterlo, 1976, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1976, chapter 1934.
- Art historian Mr. C. Hilhorst.

**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Male Goat, Young Goat, Goat Lamb, Fish* ca. 1936–1946

Glazed terracotta tiles, signed with the artist's monogram, "BvdL", on the rim.

DIMENSIONS Approx. 12.5 × 12.5 cm | 4.9 × 4.9 in

EXECUTED BY The artist in Blaricum, The Netherlands, 1936–1946

**Provenance**

Heirs of the artist.

**Literature**

Cees Hilhorst, RKD, *Vriendschap op afstand, de correspondentie tussen Bart van der Leck en H.P. Bremmer*, Thoth, Bussum 1999, p. 176, photo: 52A–52B; Evert van Straaten, Cees Hilhorst, Toos van Kooten, *Bart van der Leck*, Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo 1994, p. 104–105, photo 155–170.

Collection of ten decorative ceramic tiles featuring stylized animals such as *Young Goat*, *Mail Goat*, *Goat Lamb* and *Fish*. This collection originates from various descendants of the artist, who inherited the tiles.





**Bart van der Leck** 1876–1958

*Two Bottles and an Apple* 1946

Silver necklace featuring a small round glazed terracotta medallion mounted in a silver fixture. Signed with the monogram “BvdL” and “46”.

DIMENSIONS 42 × 5 mm | 1.7 × 0.2 in

EXECUTED BY The artist in Blaricum, The Netherlands, 1946.

**Provenance**

Eleonora van der Leck-Schonk, daughter of the artist; Annetje Schonk- van der Meer, granddaughter of the artist; Jurriaan van der Meer, great-grandson of the artist.

**Literature**

Evert van Straaten, Cees Hilhorst, Toos van Kooten, *Bart van der Leck*, Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo 1994, p. 109, photo 175.

Unique round ceramic medallion with abstract decor in primary colors, black and gray, depicting a still life with two bottles and an apple. The medallion is mounted in a silver fixture hanging on a silver chain of a later date, with silver hallmark 925.

Five small ceramic round medallions by Van der Leck have been preserved, each featuring a different design. Two of them were mounted in a necklace fixture. The medallion here on offer is one of these; it belonged to Van der Leck’s eldest daughter who gave it to her daughter, and is was passed down to her son.





# Colophon | Credits

## Rietveld's Visions

Published on the occasion of the exhibition  
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The Netherlands.

TEXTS & RESEARCH

Ad van den Bruinhorst  
Rob Driessen *Rietveld's Inspirations*, p. 48–52  
Jurjen Creman *Made by Rietveld*, p. 56–60

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ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTO'S

Sander Stoepker: photo p. 4  
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Private Dutch family: photo p. 8  
Centraal Museum Utrecht: image p. 12  
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